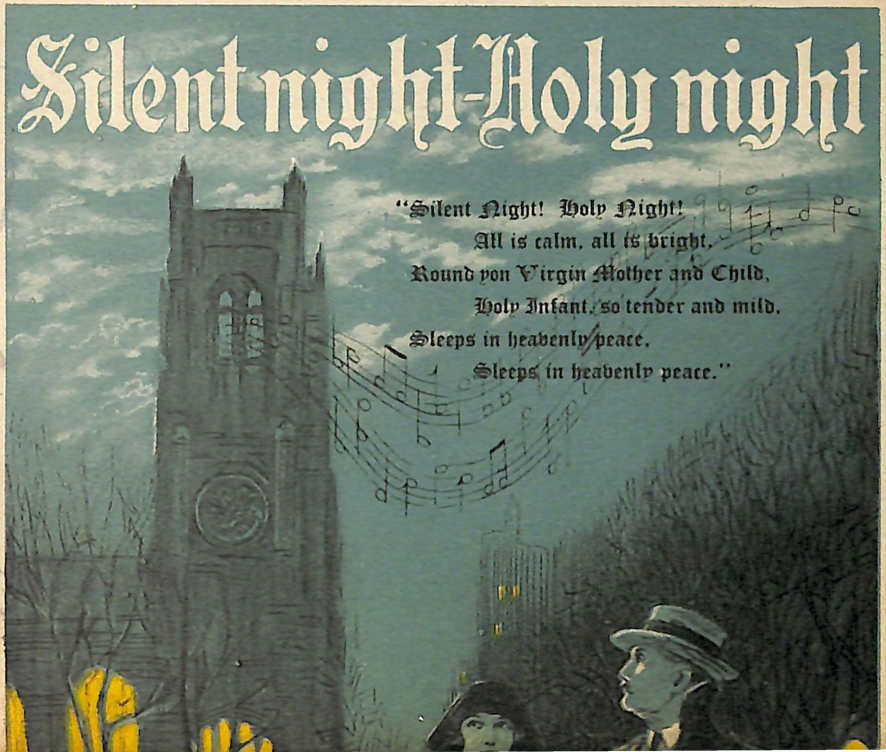
Silent night-Holy night


"Silent Night! Holy Night!
All is calm, all is bright.
Round yon Virgin Mother and Child,
Holy Infant, so tender and mild,
Sleeps in heavenly peace,
Sleeps in heavenly peace."

Pro.4:7 Wisdom is the principle thing: therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting get understanding.

Intro. Many intelligence tests given today. Humiliating to discover how little one knows, even about everything in general and nothing in particular.

The reason for our lack of intelligence is largely because people do not learn more than they have to, and they readily forget what they do learn.

Our text, Pro.4:7, says, Wisdom is the principle theing, therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting get understanding.

We pray often for the removal and forgiveness of our sins but when do we ever pray for the removal of our ignorance? And yet it is ignorance, more than malice or crime that makes the most trouble for in the affairs of state, of community or of church.

We seem to think that if the heart beats right, all our actions will be right, forgetting that it is the brain that directs the hands and feet and tongue.

Good intentions cannot avert the consequences of bad actions, therefore it is no excuse to say, "I didnt mean to do it." Your good intention may clear of blame but it cannot remove the consequence of your act. To justify oneself by his his intentions regardless of the consequences of his acts to others is pure sepfishness.

I. And so it happens that in the practice of religion there is often more zeal than knowledge, resulting in disaster to the cause of religion.

Hosea 4:6 "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because thou hast rejexted knowledge I will also reject thee." It was the lack of knowledge, not the lack of zeal that led to the downfall of God's chosen people-the Jews.

The Jews never lacked zeal.

Paul's persecution of Xns.

The Pharisee's "Crucify him!"

The Roman persecutions-Zeal without knowledge.

Phillip 11, of Spain and others.

Russian Bolshevists and Mohammedans in Asia.

"Knowledge without zeal is like a ship without driving power, without engine or sail- useless. Zeal without knowledge is like a ship with ~~rudder~~ out rudder- dangerous. The world is full of zeal, every healthy child is running over with pep and spirit, but what the world lacks to adequately control and wisely direct its zeal is knowledge.

II. But where is the needed knowledge to be gotten? "where shall wisdom be found and where is the place of underwtanding?"

We get wisdom from God, the All-wise One. "For the Lord giveth wisdom." "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, and it shall be given him."

God is Love, but He is Wisdom also, wisdom personified. "In the beginning was the "Word" . Logos. Wisdom. It includes all truth, all the ologies of man. Not just religious truth but all truth comes from God.

Some Xns with more zeal than knowledge try to confine the Truth of God between the two covers of the Bible All of God's Truth, they say, is to be found in the Bible and there is none outside of it.

The Bible does contain God's revelation to man, but it is only partial. It is supplementary to what we learn of God in all the universe and nature. The universe and all nature is just as much a revelation of God as is the Bible, and a knowledge of it is necessary to a complete understanding of God. Moral laws are not the whole code of God. There are physical laws as well. All physical laws are God's laws. The Ten Commandments are God's laws for our right living. The laws of Health are none the less God's laws for our right living.

Science is man's attempt to study God as He has revealed himself in nature; it is an imperfect attempt because such a study can only be partial to the whole truth.

Now if we believe that all truth is from God we must also believe that all truth is unified, no two truths contradict each other. When our religion and our science apparently does not agree, we must not hastily conclude that science contradicts religion and undermines our faith. Knowing that God's truth is a unity, we should conclude that the apparent contradiction between our science and our religion is not due to two truths that oppose each other but to our own lack of all the facts enabling us to reconcile the two. The trouble is not in the science or in the religion but in ourselves who lack a sufficient knowledge to grasp the whole of God's truth.

We ought therefore not to condemn either one or the other but to search further until we gain the necessary knowledge and understanding.

We are to search the Scriptures but we also are to seek after truth wherever else it may be found, in order that we may rightly understand the great problems of life.

------ We Xns sometimes forget that the Bible is not all there is to religion.

Abraham and Moses did not have the Scriptures.
The early Xns under whom Xty made its most effective inroads upon the world had only the O.T.

Take God's accusations against Job. God accused Job of having failed to grasp the divine majesty, power and love because he had failed to study the seasons, the weather, the stars, the birds, the leviathan and the behemoth. Had Job known more about natural history he would ~~have~~ not have made such blunders in his theology. If we Xns knew more about the works of God in nature we would'nt so misunderstand God's revelation in his Word.

What texts did X preach from? Always from the O.T.? Jesus took walks thru the fields on the Sabbath and talked about the things he saw- the wheat, the weeds, the birds and the flowers, the seeds and the trees. X shocked the devout people of his day because of the variety of sources from which he drew forth the Truth of God. Suppose I should lead you down the road and begin talking to you casually about the various things we saw, drawing moral lessons and spiritual inspirations from them, you would think that your pastor had gone crazy. They thus thot of Jesus.

Jesus disliked formalism and conventionality so much because these kept so much of the truth of God from the eyes of his worshippers.

III. Why should we be held to a knowledge of God's truth

Ignorance of the law excuses noone.

Step from the 4th story, fall to ground.

Edmund's small-pox, thru handling germ-laden paoers

Ignorant of the danger, but he caught it just the same.

Ignorance of God's moral laws is just the same. "The soul that sinneth it shall die." Vice and small-pox are both contageous. Ignorance of the moral law is no excuse ~~for~~ ~~exempt~~ exemption from consequences. Good intentions are not enough.

A willingness to serve God is not enough. You must also know how to serve. To save a drowning man you have to be more than brave and self-sacrificing- you have to know how to swim or throw a rope. This is why Peter said, "Add to your virtue knowledge."

The fable of the mother elephant who came upon a group of ostrich eggs on the dessert. The epephant said, "How sad to see these offspring neglected by an unnatural mother! But I, too, am a mother, and I will hatch orphant eggs." And thereupon she sat upon them. We must have more than a desire to do good, we must know how to do it.

Hence, all knowledge is useful to a Xn worker. For his services to the Master he should not divide the world into sacred and secular and then pay attention only to the sacred, utterly ignoring the so-called secular. Every Xn should read more than his Bible. He should read history, current as well as ~~#####~~ past. He should study natural history. He should familiarize himself with hygene and physiology and psychology. He should not only study the biographies of the Bible's great characters but also the biographies of the great men of other nations and of other religions than his own.

Since wisdom is the principle thing we need to fit us for the Master's service, let us learn and study and think until we become fit for service.